

Will There Be Enough Water? With Wise Management, Summer Supply Looks OK



Commissioner
Robert Peterson

I grew up in California, just north of San Francisco, across the Golden Gate Bridge. This was always a lovely area with minimal water issues until about 1976 when we felt the effects of a two year drought in California. Drastic water conservation measures were implemented.

It almost never snows in the Bay Area and rain usually was enough. But in those years, rainfall had not provided enough water to refill the lakes. Gardens dried up, dirty cars were everywhere, and clever lines like "shower with a friend" became widespread. Not an optimal situation and one to be avoided through good planning and wise water use. In other words, be better prepared! Those of us who have experienced a true drought know that a contingency plan is essential.

The reservoir levels are slightly above normal due to significant rainfall this winter. Storage is being reduced to save some space to maintain the flood "pocket."

In the 1990s, too much water was released from our reservoirs, which resulted in a water shortage. This led to concerted efforts to reduce water consumption in the Seattle area. It is interesting to note that community water consumption never did return to the old levels. People seemed to get used to the idea of conserving.

Snow levels are far below normal but not unlike last year at this time. If snow levels stay low, the reservoir will most likely be held to a higher level than normally seen in spring, allowing for enough water to get us through the dry season.

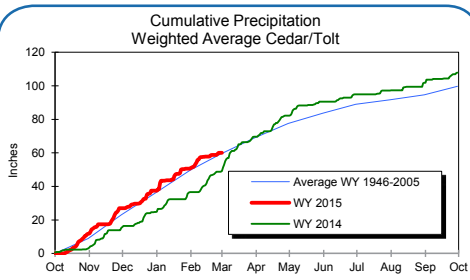
Seattle predicts that, even with population growth, the city and the areas it supplies with water won't need new water sources until 2060. For very long term water supply, SPU officials will explore the feasibility of raising water levels in the reservoir and tapping into an unused water rights in the Tolt river to expand the source of water as our population grows.

With all the news coverage on global warming (as well as the drought plight California has been experiencing), questions have been raised in our area about water supplies. We have been asked, if our snow pack is low do we have enough water? Should we be rationing water? What happens if our snow pack is low again next year?

The answer to all those questions is: as long as we continue with the amount of water consumption we now use, our region should be fine. Not only that, we should be fine in future years even with the population growth we expect. This, in my opinion, is water planning at its best. 💧

The lack of snowfall in our mountains has raised concerns in our community about the possibility of restrictions on water use, over and above our current conservation efforts.

However, despite the low snowpack, Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) is confident that there will be plenty of water to see us through the dry season.



SPU data for March 2015 shows rainfall levels consistent with last year's. More water supply info at www.nud.net "news."

Community Events



We are excited to present our 2015 line up of **FREE sustainable gardening classes!**

Classes are taught by master gardeners and professional landscapers. Join us for inspiring, practical advice on building and maintaining your own *healthy, sustainable and beautiful* gardens and landscapes.

All classes held here at NUD:
6830 NE 185th St. in Kenmore.

Pre-register to reserve your seat(s) at conservation@nud.net or (425) 398-4417.

Tues, March 24th, 6:30-8pm:
"Getting Plants off to a Great Start"

with Emily Bishton, landscape designer and environmental educator. In her 101 on gardening fundamentals, Emily shares expert advice on how to make your plants thrive from seed to green.

Tuesday, April 21st, 6:30-8pm:
"Sustainable Veggie Gardening"

with Ladd Smith, co-owner of In-Harmony Sustainable Landscapes. Learn the basics of growing great-tasting, home-grown food, and how to incorporate food crops into your large or small landscape.

Tuesday, May 26th, 6:30-8pm:
"Flora of the Pacific Northwest"

with Susie Egan, master gardener and owner of Cottage Lake Gardens. Native plants not only add rich beauty to your landscape, they also lower maintenance and support our local ecosystem. Susie covers the best varieties for your space and how to make them feel right at home.

*All classes listed at www.nud.net. Some classes may have already been held before newsletter mailing date.

**Northshore
Utility District
Board of
Commissioners**

Margaret Wiggins,
President

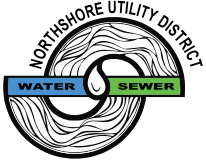
Trudy Rolla,
Board Secretary

Don Ellis,
Commissioner

Bruce Gardiner,
Commissioner

Robert Peterson,
Commissioner

Board of
Commissioner
Meetings
are held at the
District Office
on the first and
third Monday
of each month
at 5:30 p.m.
(except holidays)



District Office

P.O. Box 82489
6830 NE 185th St.
Kenmore, WA 98028

Ph: (425) 398-4400
Fax: (425) 398-4430
www.nud.net

**For more info
on the articles
featured in this
issue, visit
www.nud.net.**



ABC's of Avoiding Bad Contractors

DON'T PANIC, and Take These Steps to Protect against Scams

We encounter this customer story too often: Barbara (name changed) had a sewer backup, and contacted the first plumber she found to take care of it immediately. But the plumber told her she had to replace the whole sewer line when only one part was in trouble. This job cost her over \$10,000 when it should have been far less.

When sewage is backing up into your home, or water is gushing out in your yard, taking the time to research and interview contractors might be the last thing on your mind. However, hiring the wrong contractor can cause damage to your home and cost you thousands of extra dollars!

It's important to handle a pipe break or sewer blockage right away, but even more important to hire the right professional for the job. An unscrupulous contractor will use the stress of the situation to overcharge you.

So don't panic, do some research and use these tips to help you hire smart:

- ▶ **Get a minimum of three written estimates.** Estimates should include scope of work, warranties, references, time frames, and price.
- ▶ **Verify the contractor's current license and registration** with the WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries (L&I) (*website info below*)
- ▶ **Research their reputation.** Do not hire a contractor whose references cannot be verified. Check your friends and family networks and Yelp or Google reviews as well.



- ▶ **Know permit requirements.** Permits are for your safety. NUD requires permits for any changes to your side sewer; your city building department may require permits for plumbing work.
- ▶ **Know limits of responsibility on your sewer line.** Anything on your private property (water or sewer) is your responsibility to repair. But NUD handles the sewer from the public Right of Way to the main. In a sewer backup, call us first so we can help advise you of your responsibility.
- ▶ **Be wise to sales tactics.** Never pay for the entire job up front and be wary of contractors who want you to make a snap decision or push you with high pressure sales tactics. ♦

Did you know...

L&I is the agency in charge of registering contractors and requiring them to be insured and bonded? L&I's website is easy to use and allows you to verify that your contractor's license is active, and view any licensing violations or citations.



L&I has great tips on what to know to "hire smart" for every job in your home at "protectmyhome.net".

Visit L&I's "protect my home" webpage to learn more about how to choose the right contractor and avoid scams:

<http://lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Contractors/HireCon/default.asp>